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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1065 (1996)

1. In its resolution 1065 (1996) of 12 July 1996, the Security Council reaffirmed the necessity for the parties to the Georgian/Abkhaz conflict to strictly respect human rights and expressed support for my efforts to find ways to improve their observance as an integral part of the efforts to reach a comprehensive political settlement. In operative paragraph 13 of the same resolution, the Council expressed "its full support for the implementation of a concrete programme for the protection and promotion of human rights in Abkhazia, Georgia", and requested me "to report to the Council by 15 August 1996 on possible arrangements for the establishment of a human rights office in Sukhumi". The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. It will be recalled that in my report of 15 April 1996 (S/1996/284, para. 21), I informed the Security Council that the Abkhaz authorities had given their agreement to the idea of a programme for the protection and promotion of human rights in Abkhazia. It will also be recalled that this agreement came about as a result of the mission earlier this year of a senior human rights officer sent to the area by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Ayala Lasso. The Government of Georgia was kept fully informed of the activities of the mission. As the Council is aware, the proposed programme is to be carried out in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

3. As set out in my report of 15 April 1996 (S/1996/284, annex I), the objectives of the proposed human rights office in Abkhazia are to promote respect for human rights, protect the human rights of the population of Abkhazia in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, contribute to a safe and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons and report on human rights developments in conformity with United Nations and OSCE practices. These objectives are interrelated. The protection and promotion of human rights is a key element in encouraging refugees and internally displaced persons to resume normal daily life and to help ensure their return to the region in peace and dignity. Effective protection and promotion of international human rights norms depends on a responsible and impartial reporting of the human rights situation. The approach agreed upon between the High Commissioner for Human Rights and OSCE in this respect is meant to serve these objectives.

4. The proposed human rights office in Abkhazia would employ the following means to reach these objectives: monitor the human rights situation in Abkhazia to prevent and remedy possible human rights violations through the collection of first-hand information directly from witnesses and other reliable sources; establish direct contacts in Abkhazia so as to advise the competent authorities in Tbilisi and Sukhumi on how best to improve the human rights situation; report to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who will keep me informed, as well as to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, on the human rights situation and its impact on possible solutions to the conflict; and initiate projects on the promotion of international human rights standards through human rights education and the fostering of local capacities for human rights protection, for example, through the establishment of human rights centres, training for local administrative officials, police, judges, prison officers and non-governmental organizations.

5. The projects envisaged in the area of technical cooperation and advisory services comprise a number of seminars, designed for key public officials, concerning specifically the promotion of international human rights norms. There would also be training of law enforcement officials, including prison officials. Finally, with the objective of fostering a longer-term connection between law enforcement and administration of justice institutions in Abkhazia, on the one hand, with a reputed international human rights institution on the other, two fellowships would be made available for participation in the International Institute of Human Rights located at Strasbourg, France, for a period of one month.

6. As indicated in my report of 15 April 1996 (S/1996/284/annex I, para. 4 (c)), it is envisaged that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would deploy one Professional staff member to Abkhazia, it being understood that OSCE would also deploy one qualified person. For reasons of efficiency and security, the human rights office would be located in the premises of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) at Sukhumi. Should the office be financed by voluntary contributions (see para. 9 below), UNOMIG would provide it with accommodation, secretarial services, communications equipment and transport facilities on a reimbursable basis.

7. An indication of the estimated costs associated with the establishment and operation of the human rights office by main category of expenditure is contained in the annex to the present report. This budget does not reflect the cost of projects in human rights promotion and advisory services which would be borne by the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, which is administered by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights.

8. With regard to possible sources of funding, members of the Security Council will recall that in my report of 1 July 1996 (S/1996/507, para. 18) I indicated my intention, subject to the concurrence of the competent legislative bodies, to include the costs of this human rights programme in the budget of UNOMIG. On this basis, the proposed human rights office would report to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights through the Head of Mission of UNOMIG. Such a method of financing, which is consistent with previous United Nations experience, would have the distinct advantage of providing the human rights

programme with a secure and stable financial foundation. In this connection, I would like to recall the importance attached by the Security Council to the protection and promotion of human rights in Abkhazia, in the context of the mandate of UNOMIG, e.g., in paragraphs 7 and 10 of resolution 1036 (1996) of 12 January 1996 and paragraph 13 of resolution 1065 (1996).

9. Another option, for which there are also precedents, would be for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to seek to raise the necessary resources through voluntary contributions. Initially, funds to cover the costs of the programme for a period of six months would need to be in hand before the programme could actually be implemented. The High Commissioner has already made efforts to secure voluntary funding.

Annex

Estimated cost of the proposed establishment of the human rights office in Abkhazia, Georgia for a twelve month period

(Thousands of United States dollars)

		Amount
1.	Military personnel	-
2.	Civilian personnel	167
3.	Premises/accommodation	21
4.	Infrastructure repairs	-
5.	Transport operations	30
6.	Air operations	-
7.	Naval operations	-
8.	Communications	29
9.	Other equipment	12
10.	Supplies and services	15
11.	Election-related supplies and services	-
12.	Public information programmes	-
13.	Training programmes	-
14.	Mine-clearing programmes	-
15.	Assistance for disarmament and demobilization	-
16.	Air and surface freight	-
17.	Integrated Management Information System	-
18.	Support account for peace-keeping operations	-
19.	Staff assessment	24
	Total, lines 1-19	298